

EMBARGOED UNTIL TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 5:00 A.M. ET



Over 400 Local Governments Meet Solar Energy Milestones Under SolSmart

New research shows the national program has measurable impact on the solar market

Washington, D.C., April 27, 2021 — Over 400 municipalities, counties, and regional organizations have now achieved designation under [SolSmart](#), a federally funded program that helps local governments make it faster, easier, and more affordable to go solar.

SolSmart communities can be found in 41 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Designees are comprised of widely varying demographics and municipalities, ranging from small towns and rural areas to heavily populated counties and urban regions, representing a total of 99 million people. All have met national criteria for adopting programs and practices that encourage the growth of solar energy.

SolSmart is led by The Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office. Launched in 2016, SolSmart is a national designation program designed to recognize communities that have taken key steps to address local barriers to solar energy and foster the growth of mature local solar markets. The program offers technical assistance at no cost to help local governments become “open for solar business.”

“Across the nation, SolSmart is helping communities reduce costs, shorten permit waiting times, and expand solar energy installations,” said **Larry Sherwood, Administrator of The Solar Foundation and President and CEO of the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)**. “The success of this program shows that local governments have taken the lead in setting ambitious solar energy goals that boost economic development, sustainability, and job growth.”

“SolSmart is an asset to local governments across the country as we continue to strive towards more resilient, sustainable, and economically buoyant communities,” said **Marc Ott, CEO and executive director of ICMA**. “With SolSmart’s support, hundreds of cities and counties are now seeing significant growth in renewable energy and the economic benefits that come with it, including a larger job market.”

New Research Shows Impact on Solar Market

Research shows that SolSmart provides significant benefits to participating communities and has measurable impacts on the solar market. A forthcoming study from Missouri University of Science & Technology, Florida State University, University of Miami, and University of Texas at Austin found that SolSmart designees added between 300-450 MW of solar capacity and 12,800-19,200 new installations nationwide.

This translates the \$10 million in taxpayer funds for SolSmart into \$1-2 billion in additional solar investment. The study also found that SolSmart speeds up the permit process for solar installations by 7.5 days on average.

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The 400 SolSmart designees have reduced obstacles to solar energy; expanded local knowledge about solar energy and increased solar deployment in their communities. Some examples from recent designees are below, and additional communities are featured on the [SolSmart website](#):

- The **North Central Texas Council of Governments** has provided widespread training and educational resources to Dallas-Fort Worth area communities, including a comprehensive website on solar energy.
- **Santa Fe, New Mexico** has placed renewable energy on nine municipal buildings and is preparing to launch a major Solarize campaign this year focused on low-to-moderate income communities.
- The **U.S. Virgin Islands** launched an online permitting portal for distributed solar and secured funding for a solar-plus-storage microgrid project.
- **Wood County, Wisconsin** worked with a SolSmart partner to conduct solar feasibility studies for county facilities, leading to the first county-owned solar project.

“The impact of the historic Winter Storm Uri in the Southern United States highlighted the importance of solar energy as a tool for resiliency,” said **Lori Clark, Program Manager at the North Central Texas Council of Governments**. “SolSmart is helping cities and counties reduce barriers and develop a pathway for the accelerated use of solar. As a designated regional organization, we’ve been proud to help communities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region achieve their goals through SolSmart designation and to educate communities on the benefits that solar energy can offer.”

Other communities that recently achieved SolSmart designation (or moved to a higher designation level) include **Putnam County, Georgia; the OKI Regional Council of Governments; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Montgomery County, Maryland; Stuart, Florida; South St. Paul, Minnesota; Leon County, Florida; Steamboat Springs and Routt County, Colorado; Branford, Connecticut; Pepperell, Massachusetts; South Bend, Indiana; New River Valley Regional Commission, Virginia; and Williamsburg, Virginia.**

All municipalities, counties, and regional organizations are eligible to receive no-cost technical assistance and pursue SolSmart designation. To see a full list of SolSmart designees, visit our designee map at [SolSmart.org](#).

About SolSmart

SolSmart is a national designation and technical assistance program that recognizes leading solar communities and empowers additional communities to expand their local solar markets. Funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office, SolSmart strives to cut red tape, drive greater solar deployment, and make it possible for even more American homes and businesses to access solar energy to meet their electricity needs. SolSmart is led by The Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association. Learn more at [SolSmart.org](#).

About The Solar Foundation®

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The Solar Foundation® is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to accelerate adoption of the world's most abundant energy source. Through its leadership, research, and capacity building, The Solar Foundation creates transformative solutions to achieve a prosperous future in which solar and solar-compatible technologies are integrated into all aspects of our lives. In 2021, The Solar Foundation will merge with the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC), creating an expanded nonprofit dedicated to the rapid adoption of clean energy. Learn more at TheSolarFoundation.org.

About ICMA

ICMA, the International City/County Management Association, advances professional local government management worldwide through leadership, management, innovation, and ethics. ICMA provides member support; publications; data and information; peer and results-oriented assistance; and training and professional development to more than 12,000 city, town, and county experts and other individuals and organizations throughout the world. The management decisions made by ICMA's members affect millions of individuals living in thousands of communities, from small villages and towns to large metropolitan areas. ICMA has gathered more data on local government than any organization except the federal government, spanning a broad spectrum from economic development to local government innovation. Learn more at ICMA.org.

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